

Madam Speaker, I urge you and my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Mount Kemble Home on the celebration of 125 years of serving Morris County's women, in one of New Jersey's finest municipalities.

HONORING MR. SY STERNBERG

HON. NITA M. LOWEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 18, 2008

Mrs. LOWEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the accomplishments of Mr. Sy Sternberg and to congratulate him on his retirement as the Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of New York Life Insurance Company, the largest mutual life insurance company in the United States and one of the largest life insurers in the world.

A native of Brooklyn, New York, Mr. Sternberg earned a bachelor of electrical engineering degree from the City College of New York in 1965 and an M.S.E.E. degree from Northeastern University in 1968.

Before joining New York Life in 1989, Mr. Sternberg spent 13 years at the Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company, where he was most recently senior executive vice president.

Mr. Sternberg is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Business Roundtable and serves on its Task Forces on International Trade and Investment, Security and Fiscal Policy and the Leadership Committee of the Lincoln Center Consolidated Corporate Fund. Mr. Sternberg is also a Board of Trustees member for Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City, New York-Presbyterian Hospital, Northeastern University and the Hackley School in Tarrytown, NY.

In 1999, Mr. Sternberg was appointed by President Clinton and served through 2002 as one of three United States representatives to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Business Advisory Council (ABAC). In January of this year, Mayor Bloomberg of New York City appointed Mr. Sternberg as co-chair, along with former Mayor Dinkins, of the Mayor's task force on Career and Technical Education Innovation.

Mr. Sternberg is most importantly the proud father of two grown daughters, Jodi and Donna, and resides in Purchase, NY, with his wife, Laurie, and their son, Matthew.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to recognize my good friend Mr. Sy Sternberg for a successful career in finance and unparalleled devotion to charitable causes. I urge my colleagues to join me in honoring his tremendous accomplishments.

WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION
LEGISLATION

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 18, 2008

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing legislation that would close a loophole in the Department of Defense's whistleblowers' protection statute (10 U.S.C. Sec. 2409) and expand this safeguard

to include the men and women of the DOD contracting business who report abuses to their superiors.

Under current law, an individual is only protected—and therefore eligible for remedies—if he or she reports workplace security concerns to “a Member of Congress or an authorized official of an agency or the Department of Justice.” While I understand the importance of encouraging individuals to take their concerns to certain authorities, I believe it is imperative that we include in this authority an employee's superiors.

It seems only natural, that once someone recognizes a problem within their work environment, they report it to their superiors. This is part of a normal progression of attempting to resolve issues and challenging tasks on the job. Few people initially contact their Congressman or the Department of Justice when they first observe an irregularity on the job.

It is also important to note that many former military members migrate to the security contracting industry. Many of these men and women have years of previous service to our nation, have grown to respect their chain of command and understand the benefit it can provide in the workplace. When they have come to the conclusion that additional steps must be taken or when they have identified a significant problem in the work environment, these professionals are trained and encouraged to report their concerns to their superiors to enable them to assess the situation and foster a solution.

Similarly, many in the federal security contracting industry come from a law enforcement background with a comparable command structure and respect for their superiors.

The legislation I introduced today will ensure that those who identify problems within firms subcontracted by DOD are still afforded standard whistleblower protections even if they notify their employer about possible violations before they notify an agent of the federal government. The legislation does not require employees to notify their employer first and it does not preclude them from contacting federal officials, it simply protects employees who point out potential violations to their employer, the federal government or both. If an employee is dismissed prior to his/her notifying the government, but after notifying their employer, they will receive the necessary protections as well.

The current loophole was brought to my attention by a New Jersey resident who worked for a private security firm that guards military installations in my district and throughout the country. This individual witnessed and documented a number of events that raised serious concerns regarding the contractor's ability to ensure the safety and security of the base and the surrounding community.

Base security is not an issue to be taken lightly—anywhere and including in my state of New Jersey. As we all recall, in May of last year, the New Jersey U.S. Attorney's office arrested five men who were planning to attack another New Jersey installation, Fort Dix. After a thorough and aggressive law enforcement effort to thwart this attempted terror attack, the men accused have been detained and are awaiting trial. Still, the vulnerabilities at our military bases exposed by this incident cannot be minimized or dismissed.

The individual who brought this loophole to my attention reported to his employer what he

believed were unfulfilled contract requirements that resulted in questions regarding the firm's ability to provide adequate security. After his boss dismissed his concerns, he then scheduled a meeting with the base security personnel to discuss the matter. Before this meeting could occur, the individual was fired by the firm and barred from the base. At that time, he brought these concerns to me. However, since the law requires that a potential whistleblower be a current employee at the time he/she discloses pertinent information to a federal official, it was too late for him to be eligible for protections and/or remedies. Specifically, my legislation would expand the universe of those to whom an individual can properly report concerns to include the individual's chain of command, before and after any retribution, so that the individual will be protected and have the right to be reinstated if an investigation shows that the individual was punished for bringing the matter to the attention of proper authorities.

As we are all aware, in recent years the Department of Defense has looked increasingly to private security contractors to guard and police our military installations across the country. The men and women filling these positions deserve to be protected when they report violations and concerns to their superiors and especially if they are subsequently punished in an attempt by their employer to downplay or even cover up a violation. It is imperative that we amend the law to ensure that these employees are eligible for the same remedies as other whistleblowers.

INTRODUCTION OF THE RETIREE
HEALTH ACCOUNT ACT OF 2008
(H.R. 6288)

HON. JOHN M. McHUGH

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 18, 2008

Mr. McHUGH. Madam Speaker, I rise to discuss legislation, the Retiree Health Account Act of 2008 (H.R. 6288), that I introduced yesterday, June 17, 2008. This bill is designed to help Americans prepare for the medical costs they will incur in retirement.

When Americans engage in retirement planning, too often they don't contemplate the medical expenses they will incur. If they do, they often make significant underestimates or mistakenly believe that such expenses will be entirely met through Medicare. Often, they fail to recognize that Medicare coverage contains numerous gaps and that beneficiaries must pay deductibles, coinsurance, and copayments. For example, the monthly Medicare Part A premium currently ranges from \$233 to \$423 while Part B and average Part D premiums are \$96.40 and \$27.93, respectively. In addition, under Part B, beneficiaries must pay an annual deductible of \$135 and 20 percent of covered services. At the same time, Part D beneficiaries have a \$275 deductible and then must pay a 25 percent coinsurance levy for drug costs up to \$2,510, the entire amount for purchases between \$2,510 and \$5,726, and approximately 5 percent of all drug costs thereafter.

Current estimates indicate that an average American couple both aged 65 could need as much as \$295,000 to cover premiums for